



Light Fighters Train for Urban Combat

MOUT Course Challenges Soldiers to Assault as a Team

By Sgt. Nick Minecci

SHIMAMATSU TRAINING AREA, Hokkaido, Japan – “COMING IN!” boomed the voice of 1st Lt. Eric Nelson, 1st platoon leader, Company C, 115th Infantry Regiment (Light), as he moved from one room to the next one.

“COME IN!!!” shouted Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Browne, 1st platoon sergeant, as the snap of M-16A2 rifle fire echoed through the room.

“COME IN ... MAKE IT FAST!”

Nelson’s announcing himself as he entered the room and Browne’s invitation to enter was not part a new formality in the Army. It was part of the safety measures Soldiers of Company C used

to prevent fratricide, the accidental killing of friendly troops, also called friendly fire, during a Military Operation in Urban Terrain training here.

As their Japanese counterparts from the 3rd Company, 10th Infantry Regiment, 11th In-

fantry Division, Northern Army, looked on, the light fighters burst from room-to-room, clearing it of enemy troops and searching for intelligence documents.

The MOUT training was part of Exercise North Wind 2004, an annual bilateral cold weather field training exercise sponsored by the U.S. Army, Japan and the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force.

“MOUT is a lot of work, but I like the intensity and speed,” Browne said. The former member of the 82nd Airborne Division said the basis of MOUT is flexibility.

Flexibility was what the Co. C Soldiers were trying to show their 3rd Co. counterparts during the training.

“The Japanese are really motivated and really hungry to learn,” Browne said. “They have picked up a lot, and quickly.

“They picked up the basics of MOUT from us, but they also have modified their room techniques to suit their own [style],” he added.

Browne said that was a major plus from the joint training, because the JGSDF troops and U.S. Soldiers can get more ideas and different styles of performing MOUT as well as techniques to improve survivability for both in actual operations.

“Doing 60 years of self-defense has caused [the Japanese] to perfect one way of doing things, but here they are learning to take better advantages of



Light fighters from 1st Platoon, Company C, lay in the prone position as a Black Hawk from the 78th Aviation Battalion lifts off after inserting the team for an assault on a MOUT site.



Photos by Sgt. Nick Minecci

Corporal John Wahl, 1st platoon field medic, holds the door as the fire team prepares to enter and take down a room during MOUT training.

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What a Difference a Year Makes

Newbie Reflects on Exercise North Wind 2004

By Spc. Kristin Crowder

On this day one year ago, I was probably doing some kind of common-task training in the chilly South Carolina air. I was in Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, S.C., and was the second-oldest female in my platoon at the age of 26.

After graduating from BCT in April 2003, I went onto the Defense Information School at Fort Meade, Md., to receive training in military journalism. Six months later, I'm here in Japan, covering Exercise North Wind 2004.

A lot can happen in a year.

After settling back into my civilian job for a couple of months, I received an email from an NCO in my Reserve unit, asking for volunteers in my MOS for North Wind. A free trip to Japan? I jumped at the chance.

After being here more than two weeks, I now know it has been much more than just a free trip to Japan. I have had my first glimpses of "real" Army life and training, having previously only been exposed to drill sergeants and once-a-month training with my unit.

Everything I've seen during North Wind has been exciting to cover, but being afforded the opportunity to embed with Company C, 1st Battalion, 115th Infantry Regiment (Light) during their MOUT exercise Tuesday was beyond anything I could have imagined.

I was thrilled to have been able to run through the course with them (and hopefully didn't get in their way too much), and the Black Hawk ride - well, I'm still coming down from that high. I am very appreciative of Capt. Edmond Riley, 1st Lt. Eric Nelson, and the flight crew for allowing me to tag along.

For all the fun I've had here, there have been many challenges, as well. I was the only Soldier my unit sent for the

exercise, so I was nervous about meeting the other members of the MPAD.

Luckily, they were all normal human beings who didn't make me feel like the peon E-4 that I am.

Next, I had to conquer the fear of flying in an enormous airplane for thousands of miles. The flight was smooth enough, but sitting still for all those hours was almost as bad as turbulence for me.

Having never been anywhere outside the U.S. before, just going to a foreign country where I didn't speak the language was a daunting prospect. After landing at the Chitose airport, we stopped briefly at a 7-11 for a snack. I was afraid to approach the counter and pay for my food, so I made everyone else in my group pay first. When it was finally my turn, I was surprised by the politeness of the clerks and the great ceremony with which they presented my purchase to me.

Upon arrival to Camp Makomanai, I had to familiarize myself with the MPAD's equipment, including a complex digital camera I had never used before. Even after learning how to operate the camera, shooting photos in the field was difficult at first because of the blinding snow and white uniforms.

Of course, the simple act of maneuvering through the snow could be a challenge in itself. On more than one occasion, I would be walking easily on packed snow and the next thing I knew, I would sink up to my waist and be unable to move! Despite being wet and cold afterward, it was always fun.

My exposure to Hokkaido's culture has been considerable, thanks to our wonderful friend Mr. Hideo Kawada and the kindness of our counterparts at the Japanese public affairs office at Camp Makomanai. We have eaten outstanding



Photo by Sgt. Nick Minecci

Specialist Kristin Crowder (right) shadows Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Browne, 1st platoon sergeant, as Company C maneuvers through the MOUT course at Shimamatsu Training Area.

meals, sang some great karaoke songs and spent absurd amounts of money in the 100-yen shops. The Japanese hospitality has been second to none.

I am no longer afraid to talk to clerks in 7-11, travel on the trains, or eat things that have tentacles. I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge about U.S. Army and JGSDF infantry tactics and training doctrine. I have met wonderful Japanese Soldiers and civilians, and had the privilege of meeting and working with some very high-speed U.S. Soldiers.

More so than ever, I am sure that walking into the Army recruiter's office on that day in January 2003 was not a fluke; this is where I belong.

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Medics Maintain Soldiers' Health

Story and Photos by Sgt. Kate Neuman

CAMP MAKOMANAI, Hokkaido, Japan -- Supporting the U.S. fighting Soldiers is the mission for the medics working in the Medical Dispensary at Camp Makomanai during Exercise North Wind 2004.

The medics work out of a room inside that also houses the Japanese Medical Dis-



Specialist Carolyn Edwards takes a patient's blood pressure

pensary here.

Lieutenant Col. Carol Stickel, an Army reservist from the 4219th Army Hospital at Picatanny Arsenal, N.J., said their higher headquarters tasked her for this mission. Specialist Carolyn Edwards accompanied Stickel as her medical specialist.

The two-medical aid station was set up at Makomanai to care for about 80 Soldiers here to support the Light Fighters of 1st Battalion, 115th Infantry Regiment (Light), Maryland Army National Guard. The station also had a food inspection specialist, Sgt. Tameka Griffen, who checked the dining facility food, and a water purification specialist, Spc. D'wayne Pernell, Center for Health Promotion Preventative Medicine, Pacific.

Most of the support soldiers are part of the 505th Quartermaster Battalion, Okinawa, Japan. Others were Reserve soldiers from Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Stickel and Edwards arrived in Japan Feb. 13, three days before the bilateral exercise began.

Stickel said there are three physician assistants and about four Soldiers trained as emergency medical technician/paramedics (MOS 91W) staying at Shimamatsu Training Area with the infantry troops.

The Makomanai dispensary operates from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., but Stickel is on call 24-hours a day, should an emergency arise after-hours.

It's amazing to "see how two different



Lieutenant Col. Carol Stickel, nurse practitioner at the Department of Veteran's Affairs, VA Hospital in East Orange, N.J., examines a patient's ear at the beginning of a medical exam.

Armies and languages come together", Stickel said. "They [Japanese counterparts] have been accommodating, professional and couldn't be more supportive."

Although everyone in the dispensary is only a phone call away, Stickel said she's made sure all her Soldiers received a day to tour the city as well. Several took the opportunity to join other Soldiers on a day trip to Sapporo City.

Amazingly enough, as cold as the weather is in Hokkaido, there have been no cold-weather-related injuries, Stickel said. Not even a cold, she added.

"The Soldiers have been thinking safety first. They have brought the clothes and equipment they've needed."

Stickel said most of what she's seen have been minor orthopedic problems, including sprains and simple fractures.

HOKKAIDO HUMOR

By Master Sgt. Steve Opet



Correction

(Editor's Note: In the Feb. 24 issue of *The North Wind*, the soldier pictured below was misidentified. We apologize for the error.)

Specialist Raymond Ritzau, Co. B, 1/115th, inspects an historic exhibit at the Hokkaido museum.



Photo by Sgt. Kate Neuman

About the Artist

Master Sgt. Steve Opet is the Chief Public Affairs Noncommissioned Officer for the 354th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, 99th Regional Readiness Command, Coraopolis, Pa. Master Sgt. Opet has been drawing since he was 5 years old. His website is at steveo48.home.comcast.net

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variables,” said Pfc. Daniel Jett, a grenadier with Co. C’s 1st Squad, 1st Platoon.

“It has been interesting working with them, they have a lot of pride,” he said. “Part of me wants to go home, but part of me really wants to stay,” the Dale City resident added. 🌐



Photo by Sgt. Nick Minecci



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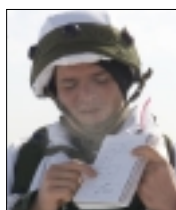


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FIELD FACES AND FASCINATING PLACES



Photo by Sgt. Nick Minecci



Photo by Sgt. Kate Neuman



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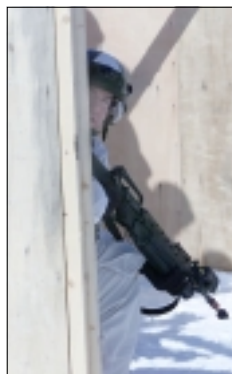


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